

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 5:</b> General Case Management	<b>Effective Date:</b> May 1, 2008
	<b>Section 9:</b> Informal Adjustment (IA)	<b>Version:</b> 2

<b>POLICY</b>	<b>OLD POLICIES: 206.2; 304.22</b>
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will initiate a program of Informal Adjustment (IA) when:

1. A child abuse/neglect (CA/N) allegation is substantiated;
2. Voluntary participation in family and/or rehabilitative services is the most appropriate course of action to protect the safety and well-being of the child;
3. The parent/guardian/custodian consents to an IA; and
4. Juvenile court approval is requested and obtained.

The duration of the IA will be no more than six (6) months.

**Note:** Progress Report on Program of IA:

1. Five (5) Month Report (SF 52434) indicates that additional time is needed to complete the requirements of the IA, DCS will request a three (3) month extension;
2. If the extension is approved, DCS will file a Progress Report on Program of IA:
  - a. Eight Month Report (SF 52435), regarding the compliance status.

DCS will file a petition for compliance if a parent/guardian/custodian fails to comply with the services outlined in the IA agreement. See Related Information for further details.

DCS will consider filing a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petition if the parent/guardian/custodian does not comply with the terms of the IA or the best interests of the child requires additional services for which court intervention is needed.

When requesting an extension of the original six (6) months IA agreement or by the filing of a (CHINS) petition, DCS will redetermine if the child continues to be at imminent risk for placement and that reasonable efforts are continuing to be made to safely maintain the child at home. See separate policy, [2.1 Child at Imminent Risk of Placement](#).

If the parent/guardian/custodian has initiated an appeal of the substantiated determination, consideration of the appeal will be delayed until after completion of the IA.

#### Code References

1. [IC 31-34-8 Program of Informal Adjustment](#)

## PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Complete the [Program of Informal Adjustment](#), outlining the activities or actions to be completed by each person and the deadline for completion. All activities and actions should directly relate to the safety and well-being of the child;
2. Review the final document with the family to assure that each person understands and agrees to his/her responsibilities;
3. Assure that the parent/guardian/custodian and other participants understand the consequences of failure to comply with the terms of the IA before asking for signatures;
4. Provide each person who is named in the IA with a copy of the signed agreement;
5. File the IA and a Preliminary Inquiry (PI) with the court;
6. Utilize the Child and Family Team (CFT) to support the family in completing the terms of the IA agreement;
7. Review and discuss the Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Strengths and Needs Assessment with the family;
8. Discuss with the family any potential barriers to obtaining and/or participating in services (e.g., transportation, childcare, work schedules, etc.);
9. Monitor the family's progress, and complete and submit to the court the five (5) month compliance report;
10. If the family is not making progress toward the terms of the IA, request an extension from the court or request approval to file a CHINS petition; and
11. Close the case, if no further DCS involvement is required.

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE

1. N/A

## FORMS AND TOOLS

1. Program of Informal Adjustment – Available in ICWIS and on p. 46 of the [Juvenile Justice Benchbook: Child in Need of Services](#)
2. Progress Report on Program of Informal Adjustment - Five Month (SF 52434) – Available in ICWIS
3. Progress Report on Program of Informal Adjustment - Eight Month (SF 52435) – Available in ICWIS

## RELATED INFORMATION

### **Petition for Compliance**

If the local DCS office determines the parent/guardian/custodian has not substantially complied with the terms of the Informal Adjustment, the local DCS office may file a petition for compliance with the Court. Upon the filing of a petition for compliance and after notice and a hearing on the petition for compliance, the juvenile court may order the parent/guardian/custodian of a child to participate in a program of IA approved by the court. A parent/guardian/custodian who fails to participate in a program of informal adjustment ordered by the court may be found in contempt of court.